



# A True Friend

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**T**here once was a very powerful king who lived a long time ago. He led his army to victory over many countries. His empire stretched so far that you would think he ruled over the entire world. In every country men told about his daring deeds. No king ever ruled such a large empire. His name was David the Great.

One morning, when he was not fighting wars and needed a little break from his kingly duties, King David rode out into the woods for a day's hunting. He had with him many of his friends. Everyone was happy to be out on such a beautiful, sunny day. Riding behind them were the servants who took care of the food and the animals.

They were such a happy group going out for a day's hunt. The woods were ringing with their shouts and laughter. Everyone expected that by the end of the day they would have packed their hunting bags with a lot of game.

On the King's wrist was a beautiful and majestic hawk. In the days of King David, hawks were used to help the hunters. The hawk would fly way up high and circle around looking for deer or rabbit. When it finds one, it would swoop down real fast telling its master where he could find his next hunt.

All day long King David and his friends went looking for prey but they were not as successful as they thought they would be. Soon it was getting dark and the party started for



home. While everyone else took the fastest route back home, King David decided to take the long way home by himself. He was very familiar with the forest and knew of a valley between two mountains that will lead him home.

It had been a warm day and the king was very thirsty. He remembered that there was a clear spring that flowed in the valley and went looking for it. The hawk, which had been on the King's shouldered, had flown away. He knew that it would find its way home.

Finally the king found the stream but it was the dry season and the fast flowing stream of the wet season was now a slow trickle of water coming through the rocks. The king was very glad to find even the small trickle for he was really thirsty.

He jumped off his horse and took his cup out of his hunting bag and patiently filled the cup with water all the way to the top. As he was getting ready to drink the water, there was a swooping sound and BANG! The cup had been knocked out of his hand.

The king looked up and saw his hawk. It flew in a couple of circles and then rested on some rocks on the top of the mountain where the water spring was coming from. A little confused, the king again tried to fill his cup. This time he filled it only half way but again the cup was knocked out of his hand.

Now the king began to be angry. He tried again and for the third time the hawk kept him from drinking.

Now the king was really angry. "How dare you act this way?!" the king said.



Then he filled up the cup again. But before he tried to drink, he drew his sword.

“Now, Sir Hawk,” he said, “this is the last time you will knock the cup out of my hand.”

He had hardly spoken when the hawk again knocked the cup out of his hand. But the king was expecting the hawk and as the bird passed, he struck it with his sword, killing it.

The king left the bird bleeding on the ground and began looking for his cup again. The cup had fallen between two rocks and was lost. The king still wanted a drink and was determined to drink from the spring. Without a cup, he had to climb the mountain to get to the spring.

He began to climb the steep bank to the place from which the water trickled. It was hard work. The higher he got, the thirstier he was.

Finally he reached the place. There was the pool of water. But in the pool of water, almost filling it was a dead snake of the most poisonous kind.

The king stopped. He forgot his thirst. He thought only of the poor dead bird lying on the ground below him.



“The hawk saved my life!” he cried,  
“and how did I repay him? He was  
my best friend and I killed him.”



The king climbed down and gently picked up the hawk, wrapped it in cloth and placed it in his bag. Then he mounted his horse and slowly went back home. He had learned a very important lesson. In his ignorance, he hurt the one who cared about him more than its life.

Believe it or not the story of King David happens everyday to each one of us. We too have a very special Friend who always tries to take care of us and protect us. He was willing to die for our sake, even though we didn't deserve it. Our very special Friend is our Lord Jesus Christ.

The hawk can be a symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ and the snake in the spring a symbol of the devil. Many times the devil hides his poison in places that may look safe, like in a song we listen to or a book we read. But because we do not know all of the devil's tricks, we can easily drink his poison. The devil's poison are tricks he uses to make us sin against God. When we sin and do not repent and confess to Abouna, we will die spiritually.

But our Lord Jesus Christ is always there to help us against the devil's tricks. He says through the words of the apostle John, *"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."* (1 John 4:4) This means that because we belong to God we will have victory over the devil because He (our Lord Jesus Christ) is in us (especially when we take the Holy Body and Blood during the Eucharist Divine Liturgy).

So let us remember that when we sin it is like crucifying our beloved Jesus Christ. It is because of sin, our sin that He died on the Holy Cross. We should not do anything that will make us regret our actions, like King David, but instead we should always try to please our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father in Heaven by following His commandments.